

You have to suffer, baby, to be beautiful.

And they did. For centuries women were told what mattered most was their appearance. They would go to any length to remain young and desirable in the eyes of the world. Men, on the other hand, considered nobler indeed, were judged primarily on what they did.

How women envied that relaxed attitude when it came to an extra pound or two around the middle, gray hair, and even crow's feet.

Well, no more.

According to the American Association of Plastic

Males are rejecting
the comfort level of their
fathers' "lived in" look
and are leading the trend to
cosmetic surgery for everything
from liposuction to face lifts.

By Marilyn Bauer

Surgeons, more than 99,000 men underwent cosmetic procedures in 1998. Record numbers of motivated men are rushing to the offices of local doctors to have love handles sucked, noses bobbed, eye lids nipped and breasts reduced — all in the name of going for that competitive edge.

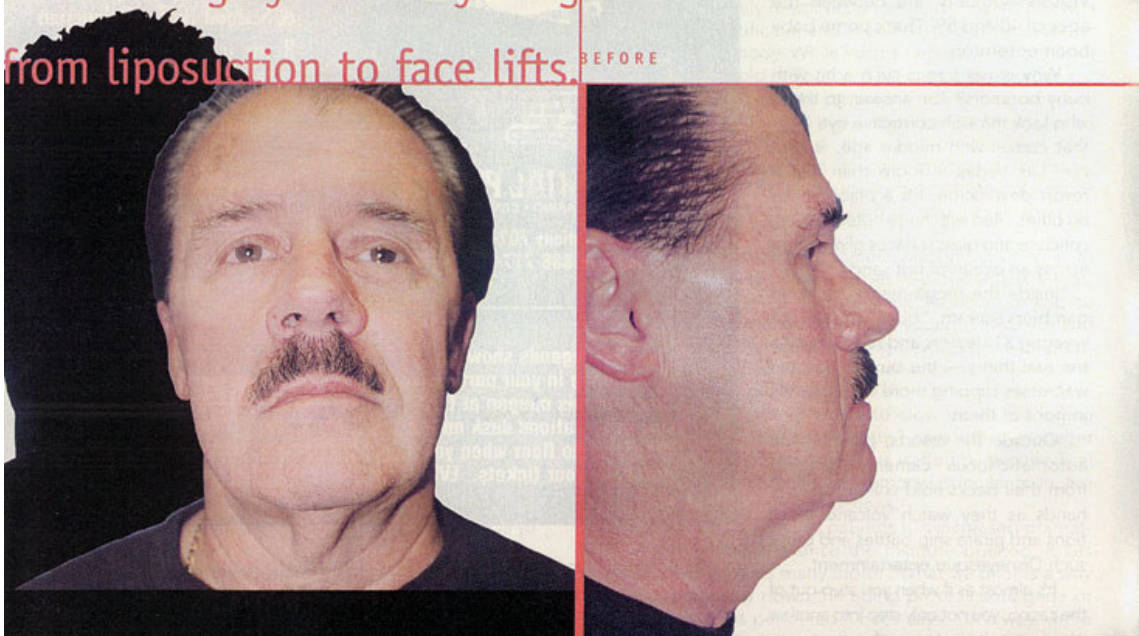
Tad

Tad Butler* was willing to tuck and tell. A successful 54-year-old real estate agent, he made the move to open his own firm earlier this year. In a highly competitive market like Las Vegas, Tad wanted to make sure he was ready for the fray.

He consulted a nutritionist and began to work with a personal trainer, lost weight, reduced his cholesterol by 80 points, and brought his blood pressure way down. "The only thing I couldn't change was my double chin," he says. "I saw plastic surgery as the final effort to make myself look and appear as young as I thought I was."

Tad contacted Las Vegas plastic surgeon Dr. George Alexander to take care of the excess fat pooled at his chin and to perform a blepharoplasty, or eye lid surgery, which Tad maintains makes him look less tired and more alive. As a result, Tad says he is more confident and outgoing.

"I was trying to reinvent myself," he says. "I don't think plastic surgery is just a woman's prerogative. When I opened my own business, I was no longer marketing myself as part of a company. I had to go out and meet lots of new



Patient before and after photos from Biff McCann, M.D., F.A.C.S.

You're
not Getting
Younger.

people and basically sell myself."

ASPS president Paul Schnur M.D., says, "Women are no longer alone in their desire to look and feel young. More and more men are having surgery not only to look and feel younger, but also to give themselves a competitive edge in the workplace."

The numbers are staggering: In 1998 more than 20,000 liposuction procedures (suctioning out fatty deposits) were performed on men — more than tripling those done in 1992. Eye lid surgery increased by 75 percent to 15,564, rhinoplasty or nose reshaping climbed by 3,000 additional surgeries, face lifts doubled to over 5,000 operations, and breast reduction procedures weighed in at 9,000 operations.

This doesn't surprise Dr. Biff McCann whose local practice reflects the national statistics. "Men feel their appearance is more important now," he says. "A lot has to do with the baby boomer population — a group, for the most part, who keep themselves in shape. They're aging to the point where they think they look older than they feel and they're using plastic surgery to lessen the gap."

Since baby boomers began crossing the 50-year mark in 1996, cosmetic surgery has risen 47 percent. And, more seniors age 75 and older have gone in for nips and tucks — a 113 percent increase in the past two years.

"Wishing to look younger is a universal desire," explains Dr. Goesel Anson. "We get older, but we're still healthy. We want to look the way we feel. For men there are career

pressures that women are just starting to feel as they move into the higher echelons of the work force."

Since the recession and subsequent downsizing of the early 1990s, men and women have used plastic surgery as an investment in job security. For the first time, middle-aged men found themselves competing for jobs against younger men and against women. They learned what women have known for a long time: Often the best jobs go to the best looking.

William

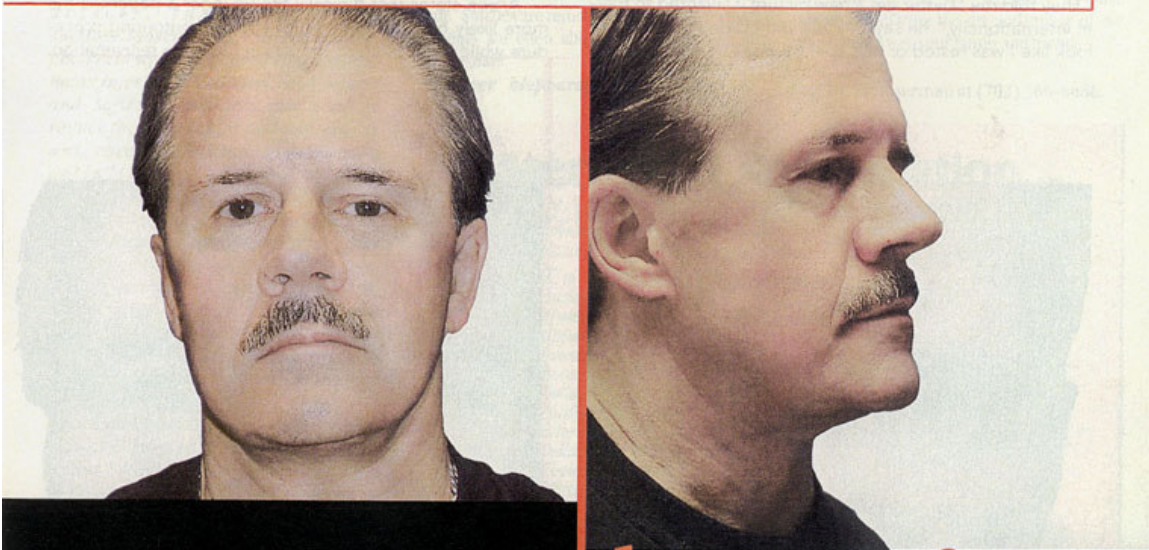
William Sanford* consulted with Dr. Anson when he found it impossible to find a job. He had relocated to Las Vegas from San Francisco and found, to his surprise, he couldn't land a job.

"I moved here cold from San Francisco," the 61-year-old general contractor says. "This place is booming. The thought never entered my mind that I would have a problem finding a job. I have a broad background and have switched careers several times in my life. But all I heard on interviews was no, no, no. I tried to evaluate what was going wrong. I could sense the reason I wasn't getting work was I looked too old. I could just feel it. I tried to slough it off, but that was what was happening."

Sanford underwent upper and lower eyelid surgery and brow lift with Dr. Anson, and, he he was soon employed. "It definitely did help me," he says.

Age discrimination is a real problem for older workers.

AFTER



you're
Getting Plastic
surgery

Last year, 14,141 age-bias complaints were filed with the federal Equal Opportunity Commission, representing 18 percent of all charges filed that year.

Sanford agrees. "I went ahead with the procedure to look younger and get a job. But you can't lose perspective. The surgery made me look 50 or 55. I came across a lot easier and felt good and got a job. But I didn't fool myself. Nor did I fool myself about my desire to look good for the opposite sex."

"There's a need to feel competitive," Anson says, "to feel you're not over the hill, to stay in the game."

Sean

Sixty-four-year-old Sean Harris* didn't like what he saw when he looked in the mirror. "I had a turkey neck and long unattractive jowls," he says. "As you age, you no longer look the way you think you should. I decided I wanted to change that and went to Biff McCann for a face lift and later liposuction on my stomach and love handles."

Harris was a member of the medical establishment and wasn't afraid of surgery or shopping around for a doctor he felt he had a rapport with. "Biff was like a sculptor," he says. "He sat me up in the chair, made a few cuts, pulled the skin back, then stepped back, considered his work, and did some more. I told him, 'Don't be conservative.'" Harris was out of the house the day after the surgery — although that is not the norm. He says it was possible because McCann did not wrap his face which cut down on the bruising.

A short time later, Sean went overseas on a business trip but was stopped at immigration by agents who told him he did not look like the man in his passport photo. "They told me I better get a new picture if I wanted to travel internationally," he says. "I told Biff I didn't just want to look like I was rested or had spent a week in a spa. I want-

ed to look good and Biff understood what I meant." The liposuction, to Harris, was no less dramatic. "I could lean back in my airplane seat, stretch out my legs and I didn't have a belly." According to Anson, in reality liposuction may require as many as 10 days for recovery and a face lift can take two weeks.

The ideal male body has clearly changed over the years. It wasn't so long ago that fat was in and big men like Winston Churchill, Alfred Hitchcock, Ernest Hemingway and Babe Ruth were considered role models of masculinity. They were portly because they were prosperous — in direct opposition to the ubiquitous 90-pound weakling to whom all sorts of physique-enhancing products were sold.

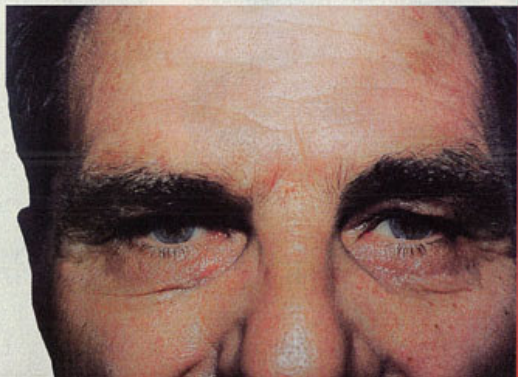
Some say the move to gym-built bodies was the result of the gay movement and the objectification of pecs and flex. Body building went mainstream and even hulk men like Arnold Schwarzenegger slimmed down. There's no denying beef cake is big business these days. With Calvin Klein underwear ads, the reintroduction of a bulked-up Marlboro Man, and fitness magazines dedicated to "losing flab in ten days," it's no wonder men are going under the knife.

Even if there is something to the competitive edge theory, men are learning another truism embraced by women for years: Looking good is its own reward.

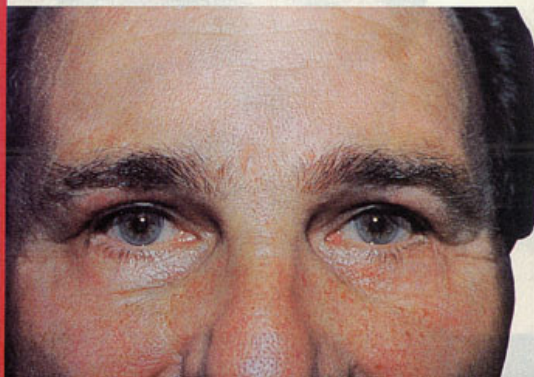
"My typical patient is your run-of-the-mill guy who's starting to get a little paunch and is noticing a little love handle," Anson says. "Even though he's working out in the gym, he still sees it. He wants to look the way he did 10 years ago when he didn't have to struggle with the way he looks. Lipo is a way to take care of that."

Anson states that typically the younger a patient is the more likely he is to come in for a body contouring procedure while older patients are looking for face rejuvenation.

BEFORE



AFTER



Patient before and after photos from Goesel Anson, M.D., F.A.C.S.

In her practice, breast reductions tend to be related to a disorder so she sees them as reconstructive rather than cosmetic surgery.

But who do these men actually want to look like? What is the cultural ideal? Who has the perfect body? Anson says Ricky Martin. Alexander says there are two types: Mel Gibson and gym guy.

"I see two trends or two ideals of the perfect man," says Alexander. "One is the body builder person for whom Arnold Schwarzenegger would be the ideal aesthetic. However, there is a second almost bipolar or 180 degree opposed ideal man. I would say men like Mel Gibson who have physical attractiveness but in addition have attractiveness of personality. There are two separate cultures of ideal male physique and that is important for the plastic surgeon to understand — what the patient perceives as artistically ideal."

But beware of going too far in the direction of the Schwarzenegger model. Harvard psychiatrist Dr. Harrison Pope blames action dolls like G.I. Joe Extreme — in the same way many blame Barbie — for creating unrealistic physique expectations. Barbie's big breasts and tiny waist may have made many pre-teens feel "unpretty," but Pope says G. I. Joe's 26-inch biceps — converted from doll-size to man-size — would be 8 inches bigger than Barbie's waist.

"Before the 1960s people weren't using anabolic steroids, so men would lift weights and stay within their natural body size," Pope told the *Cincinnati Enquirer*. "But now the unnatural is possible." Anson says her patients lean toward a more natural look: "They want to look fit, like someone who goes to the gym. They've become open to all the things they have struggled with and are willing to face them and do something about them."

Alexander says part of the reason for the big rise in masculine procedures is increased awareness of advances in surgical techniques brought about by media attention.

Until the last decade, the technology relating to male procedures did not equal men's desire. All procedures favored female patients, not taking into consideration that men's skins were thicker and therefore heavier and looser than women's. Even the existence of side burns and beards posed obstacles not encountered with female patients.

Unfortunately, gravity is not kind to the heavier-skinned gender. As men age, their eyelids and brows droop low enough to block their vision. Fat can collect in heavy bags under their eyes and the weighty skin can sag around the chin. Also, the cartilage of the nose loosens, leaving it longer and sometimes bulbous. Even the lobes of the ears get longer with age.

BEFORE



Patient before and after photos from George John Alexander, M.D., F.A.C.S.

"A lot of the stuff we're doing on the baby boomer men is facial rejuvenation — facelifts and eyelid surgery," McCann says. "It's a more difficult operation with men but they still get good results. The endoscopic forehead lift, where we can actually pull the forehead up where it belongs, traditionally required an incision that went across the top of the forehead from ear to ear. Now we can look in with a camera and see what we are doing through small holes which only require small incisions."

Doctors agree, another marked difference between male and female patients is that men are less likely to talk about undergoing a procedure. (It wasn't easy finding men who would be interviewed for this article.) Anson thinks it's because men don't want to be perceived as vain.

Alexander sees it differently. "I think they're more secretive because they have a higher level of confidentiality. Men tend to be more private and in general more private about their health," he says.

But plastic surgery is not for everyone. High prices still make it a luxury, and recovery time can vary depending on the procedure. There are risks involved, as well.

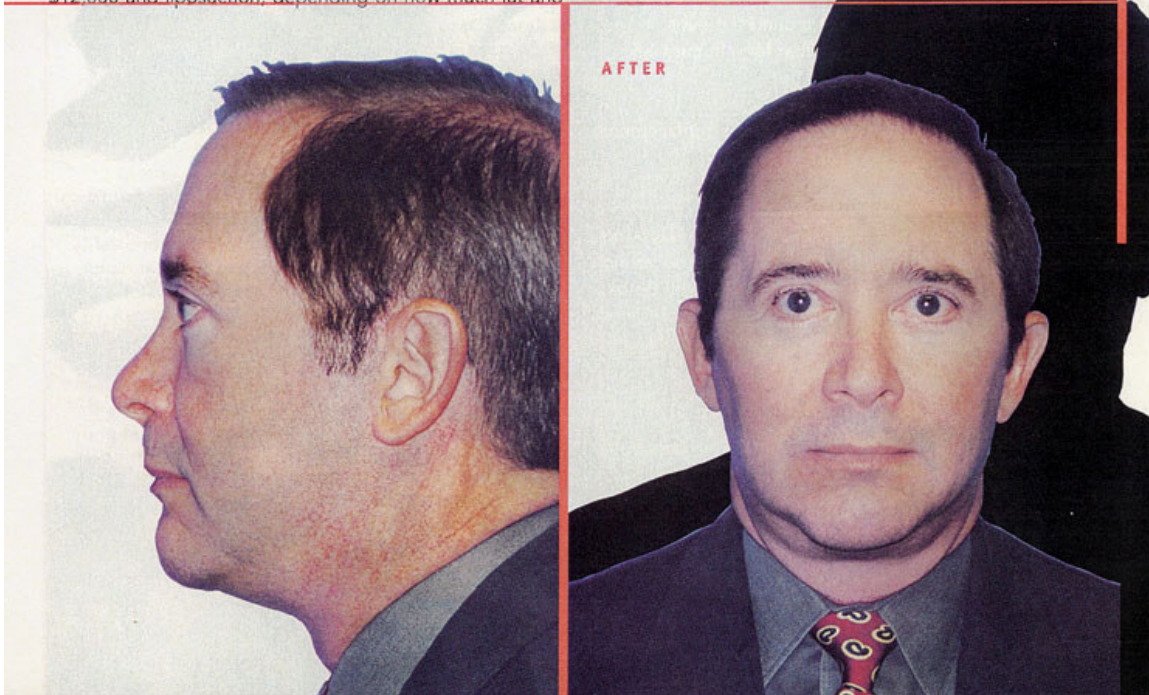
Anson says there's quite a price range in Las Vegas, but on average eyelid surgery will run between \$3,000 and \$5,000, a face lift might cost anywhere from \$7,000 to \$12,000 and liposuction, depending on how much fat and

where, will run from \$3,000 to \$7,000.

All three doctors suggested consulting with an ASPS board-certified surgeon for anyone thinking about undergoing an operation. "It's important for the public to understand what board-certification means," says ASPS past-president Dennis Lynch, M.D. "A physician doesn't have to be board certified in plastic surgery to perform plastic surgery. We encourage potential patients to choose surgeons certified by the American Board of Plastic Surgeons. This will ensure the doctor has met all the rigid requirements the public should expect of a physician who performs plastic surgery."

To verify if a surgeon is an ABPS certified surgeon, call (215) 587-9322 or visit the Web site at www.plastic surgery.org, which also contains the latest statistics and information on plastic surgery. The ASPS also maintains a National Clearinghouse of Plastic Surgery Statistics on the same Web site or by calling (847) 228-9900, ext. 347. **lvmm**

**Names of patients have been changed to protect patients' privacy*



botox BATTLES

It's a familiar scenario for many 30-somethings on up: In front of the mirror, with hands on the face, the person in the reflection gently stretches the facial skin, smoothing out the lines and wrinkles, so that he or she can see what they look with them gone. Up until a few years ago, surgery was the only option to eradicate the age-defining wrinkles and lines, but these days there is a precursor to surgery — Botox. Dr. Ginger Anson, a Las Vegas plastic surgeon, discusses the line-smoothing capabilities of Botox.

What is Botox?

It's botulinum toxin that is injected to weaken the muscles of facial expression. When the pull of the muscles relaxes, the overlying skin then flattens, smoothing out wrinkles and lines. Botox best treats the facial wrinkles in the upper third of the face such as in the forehead, frown lines between the eyes, and crows feet around the eyes. It also can be used to improve the bands that form in the neck.

Is this surgery in a bottle?

No, and it should not be thought of as replacement for surgery.

Then why use Botox?

Botox can give an quick lift in three to seven days and freshen the facial look. There are those who are too young for surgery but the lines are beginning to form. With Botox, the lines are alleviated and it helps to prevent more lines from forming. For the older person, it's a temporary fix until they choose, if they like, to have surgery.

How often should it be done?

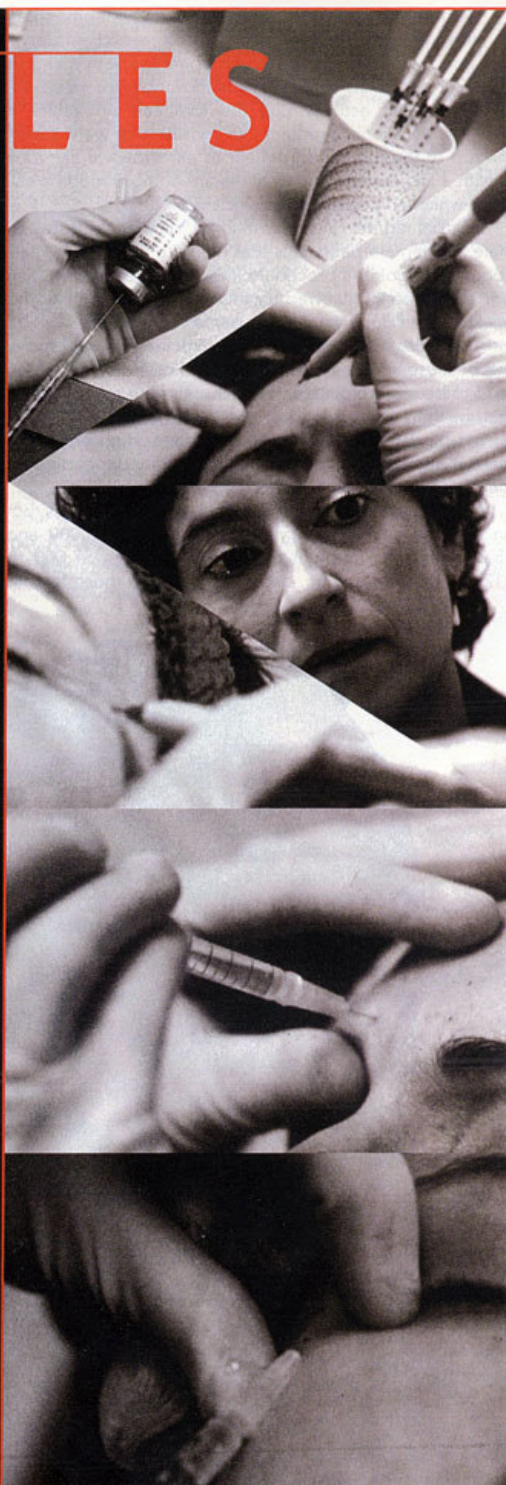
Since the results are temporary, it varies from person to person. But the average is every four to five months.

What's the most popular goal for your patients?

Most of my patients come in for Botox injections for the frown line between their eyes. Possibly because it's in their direct line of sight, they notice it more than other lines or wrinkles and it can give people an angry or mean look. But depending on the patient, I can also arch the eyebrows — giving the eyes a more open look — and diminish crows feet and improve the neckline.

What's your goal?

I want my patients to feel good about how they look. But I don't want them looking unnatural or hard. So it's important for me to temper their wants and desires with what I can actually do to have them look relaxed and natural.
— Ginger Anson



PHOTOS: DAWN HESSE